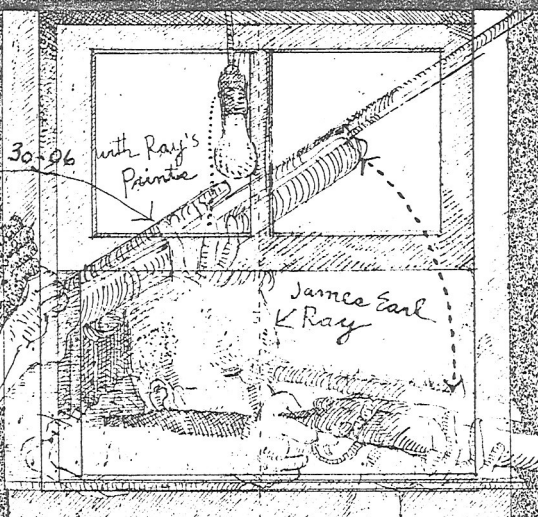


William Bradford Huie: Ray Alone Killed King
Plus: Bridge Players Talk Funny Who Is Otis Brumby Anyway?
Chip Carter and the Serendipity Drug Bust

ATLANTA

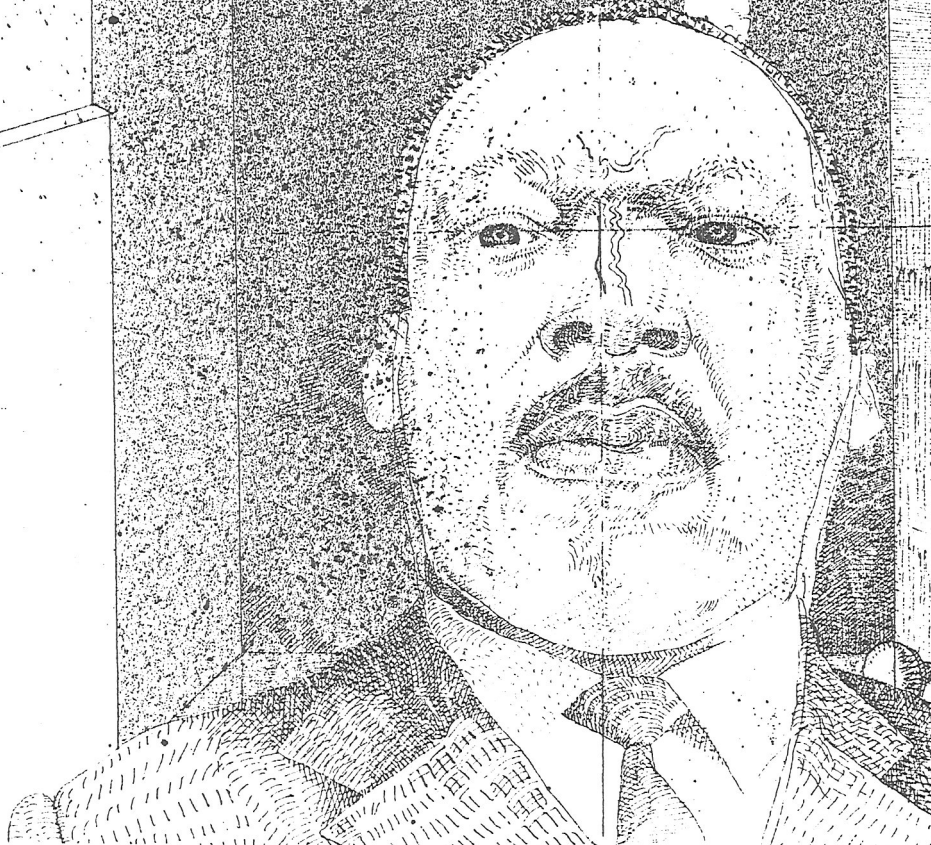
January 1979/\$1.50



James Earl Ray's
Handprint

James Earl Ray's
Prison number
carved into
his radio

00416



Alan E. Cohen '78

James Earl Ray The Final Wail Of A Lonely Loser

By William Bradford Huie

If there was a conspiracy to assassinate the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Congress spent five million dollars and missed it.

But it is increasingly apparent it was never there in the first place.

Illustration By Alan E. Cober

There is no reason why any citizen of Georgia — white or black — should doubt that James Earl Ray, and he alone, murdered Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Ten years ago, assisted by Ray and his lawyers, I found the truth about how and why he committed the murder. I wrote the truth in a book titled *He Slew the Dreamer*. Not a paragraph has been proved untrue, and a Congressional committee has just spent \$5 million verifying my work.

Georgians who want the truth can find my book in libraries. If they can't find it, they can mail me \$3.95 which I will forward to the publishers of an updated, paperback edition which will be mailed promptly. No literate adult can read that book and deny its truth.

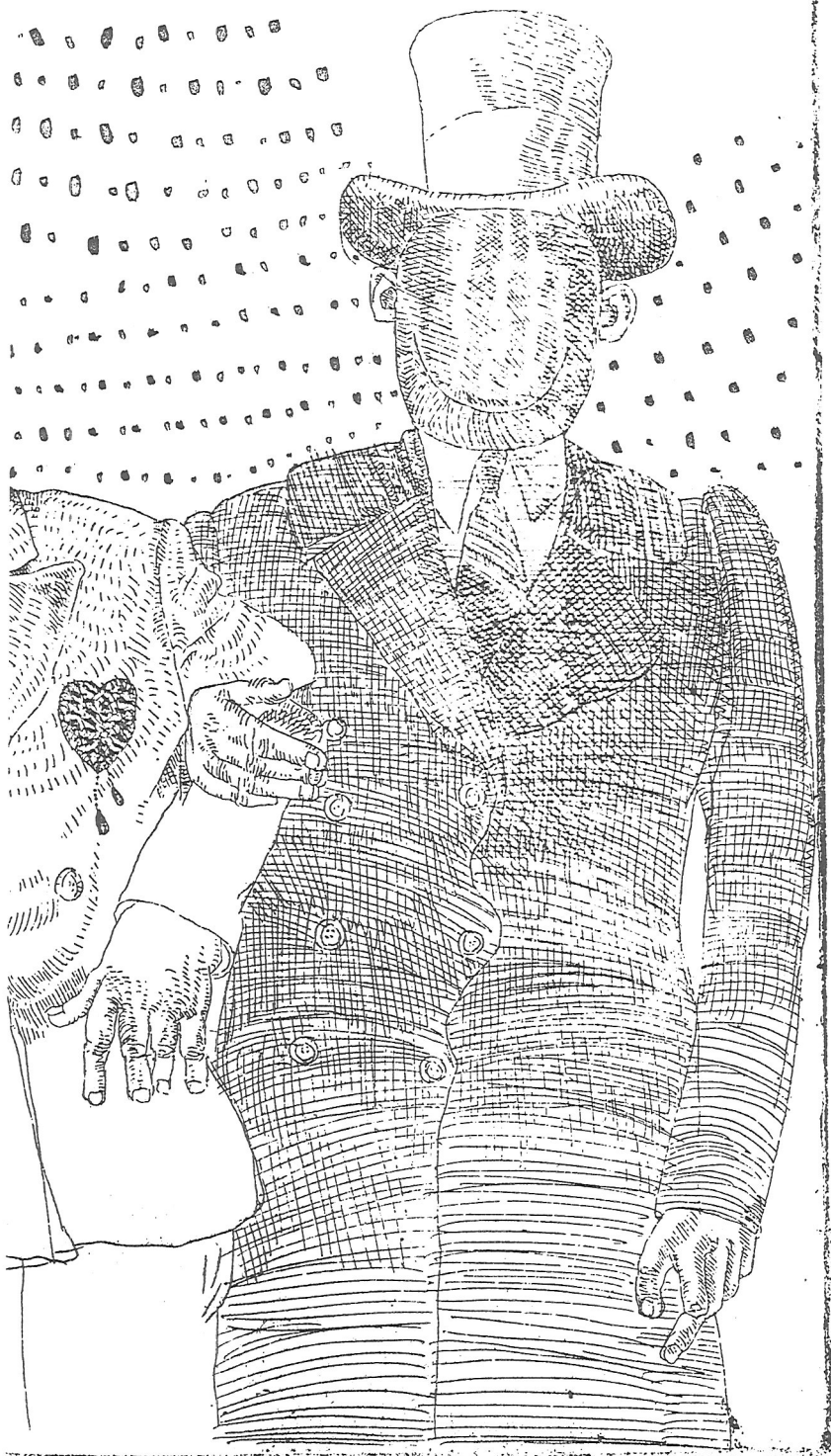
I'm no stranger in Georgia. One of my grandfathers was born in Clayton County and is buried there. I feel as much at home in Atlanta as I do in Birmingham. I was a friend of Dr. King from 1955 until his death. Since he wrote the introduction to my book, *Three Lives for Mississippi*, his name and mine appear together on books in seven different languages.

Here I shan't retell how I paid Ray \$40,000 to help me find the truth. Here there is space only for a few reminders.

To understand the murder of Dr. King in 1968, one must understand the murder of Medgar Evers in 1963. A sensitive, courageous man and head of NAACP in Mississippi, he was killed with one rifle shot from the darkness near midnight at his home in Jackson.

At 1 a.m., at my home in Alabama, I was awakened by a ringing telephone. An editor in New York said, "They've killed Medgar Evers...shot him after he got out of his car in his driveway."

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Alan E. Cober

"Terrible." I sighed. "Expected...but terrible." Then I explained. "But let me correct you on one point. *They* didn't kill Medgar Evers. *They* know that Medgar murdered can hurt them more than Medgar alive. *He* is the killer, and *he* is a racist nut who wants sole credit for the killing. So you can be sure that *he* has arranged to be identified."

Later the editor called back. "You're right," he said. "He left the rifle at the scene with fingerprints on it. And there is a new telescopic sight which can be traced."

An insignificant racist nut, Byron de la Beckwith, was arrested and tried. White witnesses placed him near the murder scene. He said the rifle was his, but someone must have stolen it, for he didn't fire the shot. The trial ended with a hung jury.

Ever since then Beckwith has enjoyed the distinction he won. He has boasted of the murder. And not even Charles Evers believes that the murder resulted from a "conspiracy." Or that Beckwith was ever paid a penny. Beckwith killed to gain attention and approval, and to cease being insignificant.

Around 7 p.m. on April 4, 1968, I was called again.

"They've killed Dr. King!"

"Not *they* but *he*," I said. "He's another Beckwith. He thinks he'll be an international hero. So you can be sure he left plenty of calling cards."

Later, another call.

"Did *he* leave calling cards! Not only the fingerprinted rifle, scope and binoculars, but even his transistor radio with his prison number carved into it!"

That's how you begin learning the motive for a murder. Did the murderer want to be identified or not? Most murderers, including all hired ones, try to keep from being identified. But the man who murders to gain distinction, to get on television, to "be somebody," he makes sure he's identified.

Note that this motive, the yearning for individual distinction, can motivate only an individual, not several individuals. More than 2,000 years ago Aristotle wrote, "Life is a constant effort to feel superior." Only one lonely loser, his guts grinding with the fact of inferiority, can feel superior by ambushing a Medgar Evers or a Martin Luther King.

After he stood in open court and swore that he murdered Dr. King, Ray's lawyer, Percy Foreman, went to his cell to tell him goodbye.

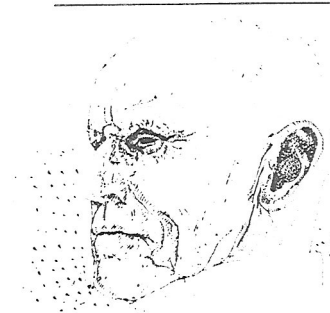
"Before I go," Mr. Foreman said, "answer one question for me. After you fired the shot, ran downstairs and dropped the fingerprinted rifle before you jumped in the car, why in the hell did you also drop that transistor radio you had bought in the Missouri State Prison? You knew damn well that with the coded number on that radio they could identify you in two hours. *Why* did you give them your prison number?"

Ray looked up and spoke triumphantly: "Because I wanted the boys at Jeff City to know I did it!"

"Jeff City" is prison slang for the prison at Jefferson City, Missouri. Ray had spent eight years there as an insignificant prisoner listening to big-shot criminals tell of murders and bank heists. Now all those criminals who had looked down on Ray could look up to him as a big-shot who had made the FBI's "Top Ten."

In the 20,000 words he wrote to me in his own handwriting, Ray tells me that six months after his escape from the Missouri prison, and six months before Doctor King was hit, he (Ray) "expected soon to be put in the Top Ten" (The Ten Most Wanted fugitive criminals).

How did he expect to "make the Top Ten"? Six months after he escaped from the Missouri prison, he was as insignificant a fugitive as he had been a prisoner.



William Bradford Huie is one of the nation's foremost authorities on the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. and James Earl Ray. Preferring the label journalist rather than novelist, some of his 23 books include The Revolt of Mamie Stover, The Klansman, He Slew The Dreamer, The Execution of Private Slovik and Three Lives For Mississippi. His latest book, The Adversary, is due out this year.

The reward offered for his capture was \$50! That's the minimum. That's the reward offered in Georgia for the capture of an escaped chicken thief.

Ray expected to "make the Top Ten" by killing Dr. King with one rifle shot, just as Beckwith killed Medgar Evers. And Ray wanted to be in that Top Ten far more than the Georgia Bulldogs or the Alabama Crimson Tiders want to be in their 'Top Ten'.

Here are the statements made by Ray to his lawyers while he was awaiting trial in Memphis:

"I don't have to be afraid of the chair. No white man has ever been executed in Tennessee for killing a nigger."

"No jury in this county will ever convict me. In the recent election [November, 1968] about 40 per cent of the voters of Shelby County, Tennessee, voted for Nixon. Another 35 per cent voted for Wallace. You can't tell me that a man or woman who voted for Nixon or Wallace is going to vote to convict the man who

rid the world of Martin Luther King!"

"If I'm sent to prison, you know I won't stay there long. No prison can hold me as long as two years. And when Wallace is in the White House, you think he's going to let me stay in prison!"

After he became Ray's lawyer, Mr. Foreman began searching for the best Tennessee lawyer he could find who would associate with him in Ray's defense. Miraculously, he was able to persuade the late John Hooker, the ablest criminal lawyer in Tennessee, to join him. I advanced Ray an additional \$10,000 for the sole purpose of bringing Mr. Hooker into the case. And I was in Memphis when Mr. Foreman went into the jail to tell Ray the wonderful news that Mr. Hooker was willing to help defend him.

Instead of rejoicing, Ray flabbergasted Mr. Foreman by flying into a rage and shouting, "John Hooker will never represent me! His son has just run for Governor and got the vote of every nigger in Tennessee! So John Hooker'll *never* defend James Earl Ray!"

How had Ray learned that Mr. Hooker's son (in the election of November, 1968) "got the vote of every nigger in Tennessee"? To answer that, Georgians will need to be told only this: after the rumor that Mr. Hooker might join the defense had spread, Ray had been visited by his most ardent supporter, J.B. Stoner.

After Ray rejected Mr. Hooker and after Mr. Foreman learned that Stoner was the lawyer in charge of Ray's defense, Mr. Foreman told Ray that no lawyer could successfully defend him if he pleaded not guilty.

"Since you already have been pronounced an habitual criminal by the State of Missouri," Mr. Foreman told Ray, "and since you already have been sentenced to more years in prison than you are likely to live to serve, the length of the sentence you receive in Tennessee is immaterial. Therefore, the only intelligent course for you in this case is to plead guilty and make sure you avoid a death sentence."

That this was sound legal advice was proved again in 1978 when a former criminal lawyer on the Congressional committee investigating the King murder told Ray, "After studying the evidence against you, I must tell you that had I been your defense counsel, I could not have successfully defended you on a 'not guilty' plea; and had I been your prosecutor, I could easily have convicted you."

I believe that citizens of Georgia, black and white, should understand more clearly the role J.B. Stoner has played in the Ray case.

When Ray was arrested in London, he thought that every famous criminal lawyer in America would want to represent him. He waited to hear from them. But the only lawyer he heard from was Stoner. Stoner wanted to defend him and wanted to launch a nationwide fundraising campaign which, he assured Ray,

would bring in hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Ray liked that, but thought he deserved a much more famous lawyer than Stoner. So he had his British lawyer telephone Lee Bailey in Boston and tell him that Ray wanted him to defend him. When Mr. Bailey declined, Ray couldn't believe it! He couldn't believe that any lawyer would reject the opportunity to gain fame and fortune by defending the slayer of Dr. King!

Ray wrote to me that he deserved to be defended by "a battery of famous lawyers!"

After being rejected by Mr. Bailey, Ray then directed his British lawyer to call Arthur Hanes, of Birmingham, and Mr. Hanes went to London and agreed to defend Ray. But what Ray wanted was to be defended by both Mr. Hanes and Stoner. The only reason Stoner didn't become an attorney of record for Ray was that Mr. Hanes refused to associate with Stoner.

But note this! When Ray reached Memphis, his first action was to get the Court to give Stoner unrestricted access to Ray's cell. This created an unprecedented situation! First Mr. Hanes and then Mr. Foreman were Ray's attorneys of record. Neither of them ever had Ray's confidence. Ray played games with them, lied to them and lectured them on how to handle his case. And all this time, even though Ray was supposed to be the most restricted prisoner in the United States, Stoner spent more time in Ray's cell than did either Mr. Hanes or Mr. Foreman!

Stoner was Ray's real legal adviser as well as his soul brother. And when Mr. Foreman left the case, Stoner became Ray's attorney of record and then became the employer and soul brother of Ray's brother Jerry.

Why was Stoner so attracted to Ray? Because he thought Ray was innocent of the murder of "Martin Luther Coon"? And why do black men now trek to Brushy Mountain to commune with this old soul brother of Stoner and pronounce him innocent of racism and innocent of murder?

Of interest also to Georgians is the fact that the final proof that Ray is the slayer of Dr. King is in the records of an Atlanta laundry and dry cleaning company.

From the start of our investigation, Ray told Mr. Hanes and me that after he bought the rifle in Birmingham he "traveled toward Memphis" and did not return to Atlanta until the morning after the murder. For some reason he seemed to feel that he *must never admit* that he carried the rifle back to Atlanta, and that he didn't leave Atlanta until after he learned that Dr. King was returning to Memphis.

Mr. Hanes and I then asked Ray to describe for us the motels in north Alabama and north Mississippi in which he claimed he spent the nights between the day he bought the rifle and the evening of April 3rd when he checked into a

Memphis motel. And Ray described these motels for us.

Now remember that Ray has an amazing ability to describe places he has been. Using his descriptions, I had had no trouble at all finding his registration records at many motels and rooming houses from Acapulco, Mexico, to Montreal, Canada. But when I tried to find the places he said he had stayed in north Alabama and north Mississippi, his descriptions were worthless.

I remember one hot afternoon when Mr. Hanes and I together were trying to find the place where Ray said he spent the night of April 2nd. I was driving, and Mr. Hanes, over and over, was reading aloud Ray's handwritten directions for us. And since Ray had wrapped the rifle in a green bedspread before he dropped it, we figured that the motel we were looking for probably had been using green



bedspreads on April 2, 1968.

Finally, we had to give up. "We've been had, Art," I said. "That bastard is sitting in his big, cool cell right now, looking at television and playing gin rummy with a guard, and he's laughing about sending you and me on a snipe hunt in hundred-degree heat!"

Even after we learned of the laundry-record evidence that Ray was in Atlanta on April 1st, he continued to insist that he was "somewhere between Birmingham and Memphis" between March 30th and April 3rd.

Those who watched Ray on television before the investigating committee saw him bluster foolishly when again he tried to deny that he went back to Atlanta after buying the rifle. But he was no match for the cool, truth-telling woman with the laundry lists who made the most convincing witness I have ever seen in a criminal trial.

The worn-out argument that "somebody had to have given Ray money" for him to travel around like that deserves no more than a paragraph here. During the 12 months from the time he escaped from the Missouri prison until he was arrested in London, Ray spent about \$9,000.

He told me where he got all of it. He knew how to get money from the drug racket, and he knew how to get money at gun-point. He knew how to get \$9,000. If somebody had paid him, why did he

have to hold up a loan office in London shortly before his capture?

The worn-out question about how Ray "managed" to get a passport in Canada means something only to people who know nothing about how passports were obtained in Canada in 1968.

To get his Canadian passport, all Ray had to have was (1) two dollars for three prints of a passport photo, (2) \$5.00 for a fee, and (3) enough to buy an airplane coach ticket to London.

All he had to do was walk into a travel agency office, swear before the travel agent that he was born in Canada, then hand over the photos and the money. Then he returned ten days later and picked up his ticket and his passport.

Was Ray a racist? Or is he a racist? The question is ridiculous. All his life James Earl Ray has been a bitter, hard-core hater of black people.

"Just the thought of a damn nigger has always made Jimmy fly into a rage."

That's his brother talking. And what did Ray and Stoner talk about during all their buddy-buddy hours together?

If he wasn't paid, where is the motive for Ray to have killed Dr. King?

How can any literate citizen of the United States ask such a question? Why did Beckwith kill Medgar Evers?

Ray killed Dr. King to make the Top Ten and get attention. And, Lord, look how successful he was!

What saddens me now is that it is black men who are making fools of themselves over Ray.

A black preacher from Chicago comes out of Brushy Mountain prison and says, "He didn't fire that shot. I looked him right in the eye and asked him if he killed Dr. King, and he said he didn't."

How amusing that must sound to Ray. He has practiced deception all his life. It's the only game he knows.

Last Summer when Ray went over the wall at Brushy Mountain and roamed around in the woods for three or four days, a black Congressman from Ohio went on television and said, "We aren't likely to see Ray alive any more. They know he's about to tell us the truth, so they've let him out, and they are going to kill him."

Who is *they*, Congressman? And what has Ray told you since then to indicate that *they* wanted to kill him?

These black men are making fools of themselves because they believed the lies of charlatans who said that Ray could and would provide the information to prove that the FBI managed the murder of Doctor King.

Hoover hated Dr. King, but Hoover didn't kill him. And no employee of the United States or of the State of Tennessee or of the City of Memphis aided the killer or had prior knowledge of the killing.

James Earl Ray deserves all the credit.

The Last Word

He Made Helpless Widows of Us All

By Julian Bond



PETER HUTTON

James Earl Ray did it.

That out of the way, we may ponder the enormity of what he did. The shot fired by Ray into Martin Luther King Jr.'s skull on April 4, 1968, murdered more than the man; it slaughtered the hopes and aspirations of black Americans that they could be the lever of their own deliverance.

The months before King's murder saw his status and reputation threatened by direct order of the paranoid and bigoted Director of the F.B.I., J. Edgar Hoover.

On Hoover's frenzied orders, F.B.I. agents set out to destroy the public image of King as a peace-loving family man devoted to democratic change.

Through sexual innuendo, deliberate news leaks, illegal surveillance, selective investigations, F.B.I. agents sought to portray King as a libertine leftist, a high-rolling exploiter, a threat to national security.

History must wait for Ray to discard his fabrications to discover whether Hoover's purge made Ray's act of murder more rational; once done, the act made helpless widows of us all.

Martin Luther King's early years as a civil rights activist - from Montgomery in 1957 through Birmingham in 1965 - were spent dismantling the American apartheid once so common in the South.

The technique was always the same - an invitation from a local group, the realization a localized movement could attract national and international attention, the introduction of S.C.L.C.C.'s

organizers into the student population, the importation of religious and labor leaders to demonstrate national support, a series of planned confrontations between non-violent demonstrators and violent police and assorted rag-tag Rebs, the swelling of local jail population, a disruption of commerce - faster than you can sing two choruses of *We Shall Overcome*, the city's merchants and bankers bellied up to the bargaining table and peace was soon at hand.

"The current apathy endemic in black America grows from King's Auburn Avenue grave, his stilled voice, his absence from our consciousness."

In 1966, however, King altered his arena. Instead of sleepy Southern towns where pot-bellied sheriffs provided instant - and telegenic - villains, he moved into the urban North and into city politics at its most rigid - the Hog-butcher of the World, Chicago.

The late Richard Daley was too devious for King; his clout and iron control of Chicago's southside ghetto flouted the techniques and rhetoric that worked so

well in the machine-free South.

By 1968, King's focus had changed. The integrated lunch counters of the urban South were appealing, but the fancy restaurants remained out of the reach of most blacks.

Front seats on busses seemed useless to a people whose longest trip was likely to be from the feudal system of the rural South to the mechanized, high-rise poverty of the North.

King began to aim at economic inadequacy and in Memphis joined striking garbage men, the urban underclass passed over by the Sixties' movement.

When James Earl Ray shot him down, Martin Luther King was marching toward economic democracy, the necessary next step in his movement for the "beloved community."

Ten years later, the income gap, differences in life expectancy and infant mortality rates for blacks and whites are growing greater.

Ray slew the dreamer and with him, the dream. The current apathy endemic in black America grows from King's Auburn Avenue grave, his stilled voice, his absence from our consciousness.

His movement has no motivator and, consequently, no motion.

The decline in black voting strength, the diminution of dissent, the moral vacuum in our leadership - our strengths expired in Memphis ten years ago.

Maybe Martin Luther King wouldn't have made all the difference. Thanks to James Earl Ray, we'll never know. ■